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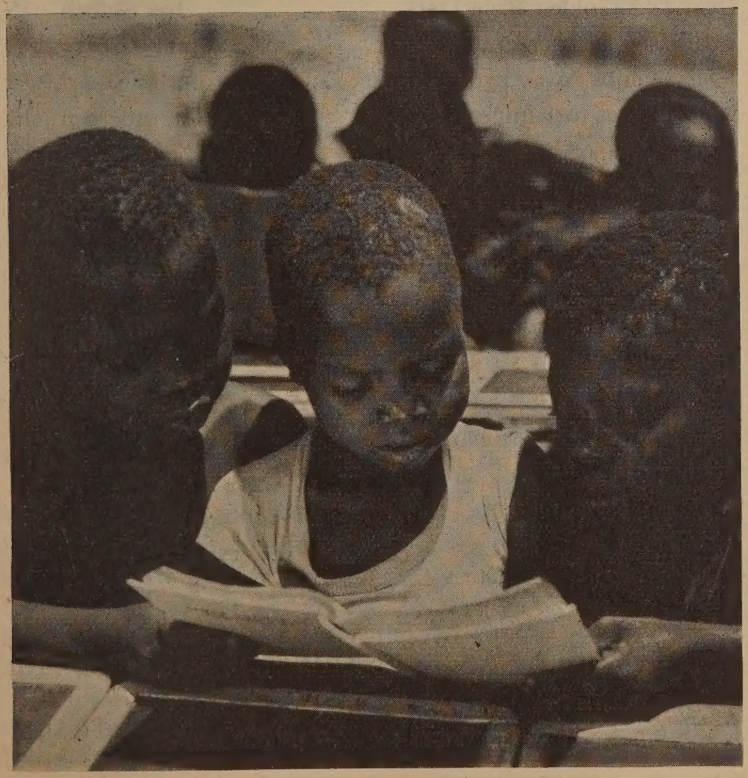
Congo News Letter

SEPTEMBER 1959



Back To School

CONGO NEWS LETTER

VOL. LI SEPTEMBER 1959 No. 3

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MAMA NGAMADIA WRITES A LETTER

DEAR BROTHER CHARLES,

YESTERDAY was the first day of school. You should have seen your namesake Charlie. You know he's almost five. He was so proud to take his sister Clementine to school. Their daddy had made them both new clothes from the material that you sent to us. Charlie walked so proudly in his new suit. He couldn't stop pulling at the suspenders. As we came near the large classroom, Clementine was frightened. There were over thirty tiny tots in that one room, many of them crying. Charlie, big brother, put Clementine on his hip and carried her inside. In one corner he found some blocks. That interested him. I watched for a little bit. Clementine enjoyed watching the blocks fall, so she was quick to knock over anything Charlie built. You can imagine Charlie. Soon he gave her a hard shove and she started crying. The teacher told him he shouldn't push his sister. His answer was, "Aw, she's just a little girl. She's got to let me have things."

Soon Mama Mwadi began singing, and her four helpers sang with her. Gradually the children became quiet and found things to play with : dolls, toy trucks but mostly blocks. One of the children that Mama was holding was already asleep. She tucked Emeline in on the raised platform built for a bed. Up there the bigger children can't walk on the babies. There is a board around the edge to keep them from falling.

Our school bell rang and I had to leave. On the way to school I passed the baby room. Twelve babies in their little baskets. You know we use the same kind of baskets for babies that you use for collecting palm nuts. Mama Kikuku and three school girls were comforting the babies. Mbongo's baby was crying real hard. She had come back late from the garden and didn't have time to feed him enough. So about twenty minutes later she was called out of class to feed little Jacques. She really is a busy woman. With this new baby they have four children.

To get all of them, as well as herself, cleaned and dressed and ready for school, she has to hurry.

It was a hot day. We were glad when 3 : 30 came and we could have our drink of milk and sit in the shade. I went over to see Clementine. Oh, that lovely new dress ! Big brother had tried to help her drink and had lovingly spilled a great deal on the outside. He himself manages very well, only occasionally spilling any milk. He's trying to learn to eat like Daddy with a knife and fork; that he has to continue practising. At recreation time the bigger tots were out on the grassy yard. One of the assistants had set up the teeter-totter and the bigger ones were taking turns. What they seem to enjoy most is the bump as the board hits the ground. Everyone just waited with suspense until it hit. Then they burst forth into loud loud laughter.

Charlie had joined a group that was learning an action song. He is so peppy. We're so glad that he keeps well. We hope that this Christmas you can come and visit us, and see the children while they are small.

Five o'clock came rather quickly. All of us went over to gather our children. I helped Mama Mbongo, for she had to carry the basket on her head, as well as her baby and the two in the nursery. Yes, and it was her day to bring water to use in mixing the powdered milk, so she had a big jug too. She has been such a friend to me. At first I thought I wouldn't like her for her village is way down south and she is a Musuku. But right from the first she has been friendly, and when I was sick she carried water and wood for us. Only Christ could teach her to be so thoughtful. She is a real Christian.

Tata Ngwono and I have started to have prayers each evening. We find it so helpful. Now Charlie says his little prayer too. Truly since we have been praying more, we find that God does answer prayer. He does give us grace and strength for each day.

Give our greetings to Mama Manunga and the children. We hope to see you at Christmas. May the Lord keep and bless you.

MAMA NGAMADIA

DEAR OLD GOLDEN RULE DAYS

MAKESI, your face and hands are dirty ! Go down to the spring and wash. Sukadi, do you have your note with your birthdate ? And where is your ten francs for medicines? Thank you, Toma, for the nice present." (An apple ? Well, no. Perhaps some caterpillars wrapped in a leaf, or an egg.) School days, school days. The four R's (reading, 'riting, 'rithmetic and religion) have become part of Congo life, although it is still only a small percentage of Congo's children who attend class. There just aren't enough schools to go around.

Another school year has begun at Moanza and the first-graders enter the new cement-block building and take their places at their desks. They are proud of their slates and slate pencils and look with interest at their first textbooks — a paper-covered reader and a number book. Many have already been introduced to simple reading and arithmetic in preparatory classes, so not everything is completely new. This is our station school.

Makesi's first-grade "country cousin", Mayamba, is not so fortunate in his schoolroom environment. His class meets in a mud and thatch building probably built by his own hands and those of adult church members. Unless it has been recently repaired, it will leak in the rainy season. Mayamba sits on a log bench for five or six hours a day, and for a desk has a split log or bamboos bound together. If he is in a class not subsidized by the government (many of our first-grade classes are church-supported), he is fortunate if he has a slate or any textbooks at all, and the classroom blackboard may be only a yard wide. His teacher has probably had no more than five years of schooling. Those all-too-few teachers with "higher" training (high school), must teach the upper classes. For these children, there is no new school uniform. For most of them there is only a dirty rag. Some boys have a pair of short pants, and a very few have a ragged shirt.

Mayamba will have many obstacles to face this year, though he is not altogether aware of them. He must learn to

read, write and do arithmetic in a dialect which is not his own, though similar to his. Will he receive help at home ? Probably Mother and Daddy don't know how to read. If Mayamba is needed for work at home, he may be taken from class for a week or two at a time to gather fiber for his father's basketry. His sisters may be kept at home to gather food, to help harvest peanuts or corn or catch crickets. Many parents are not yet convinced of the value of an education for their children, although more and more they are beginning to realize it. To these absences for work must be added the days when Mayamba will be sick with a fever. Then there is always the problem of food, of which there never seems to be enough.

Obstacles ? Yes — but there are always those who see it through, and from these classes are coming our leaders — teachers, nurses, pastors — the future citizens of Congo. They need your prayers.

In the 895 American Baptist primary schools 36,103 boys and girls are receiving their education.

These boys and girls present us with an unparalleled evangelistic opportunity. The majority of them become Christians before they have completed their seven years of primary school.

One of the most important types of schools is the Ecole Ménagère, *a Home Economics Course for girls. We have four such institutions, three of them on the same level as the primary schools, and one, at Banza Manteke, on a post-primary level. Girls who are too old to be admitted to primary school, but who have not yet completed that grade of work, are accepted in the homemaking schools. During the 1958-59 school year almost three hundred girls were enrolled in these schools.*

TO BE A TEACHER....

AFTER a two-day trip from his village by bicycle, Nabwati was hot and tired. He was glad to reach the Kwilu River before five o'clock, because the boatman was still on duty to cross over to Vanga. Nabwati and the other boys who were on their way to school sang loudly and happily as they helped row across the river in the dug-out canoe. Then it was just a short walk up the hill, and they were at the dormitories. Another school year at Vanga was about to begin. After another year of hard work, Nabwati and his classmates would receive their teaching certificates.

As Nabwati and his friends joined the other boys in the dormitory area, they suddenly felt more grown-up than they had last year when they first entered the *Ecole d'Apprentissage Pédagogique* (a two-year teacher-training school). They could look back on their first-year classes and the lesson plans they had struggled through, as well as on the lessons they had taught in first and second grade in the presence of their classmates and their teachers. They had caught some of the impressions that would stay with them when they would enter the teaching profession in another year. But there would be more experiences and more impressions before they could call themselves "teachers", without being reminded, "Not yet !"

The year ahead would be a big year, a year Nabwati had been anticipating eagerly. He and his classmates would have new experiences and bigger responsibilities. There would be more and more lessons to teach in first and second grade — a lesson every week ! He had learned to feel more at home with the little folk, and was less nervous when he began teaching a lesson. It wasn't as hard to write out lesson plans either. The methodology lessons were beginning to make more sense.

There would not only be more teaching, but more varied lessons than there were last year. He would teach lessons in Bible, Gym, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Art, French, Health and simple Science. AND, the high point in the year would be the week or two that he and his class of future teachers would

be assigned classes to teach in the district schools. That would be a week of being a teacher, having full charge of the children. It would be a week of work too — learning by experience to keep records, taking attendance and making decisions.

During this year, Nabwati would learn that there is more to being a teacher than standing in front of a roomful of children for five or six hours a day, or than sitting at a table at home making out lesson plans. He would learn the difficulties involved when the classrooms lack sufficient desks or books for the children. He would learn what children are like when they don't have enough food, or when they are sick, or when they don't get enough sleep at night. He would also see some strong, alert, healthy children, and realize that it is part of the teacher's job to teach all of his children to have healthy bodies through healthy habits.

During this year, the future teacher would see more of the results of happy homes where Christ is recognized as the Head. He would also see products of families where lying, theft and unfaithfulness are the accepted habits. He would see evidences of bickering and deception among children and among adults. This year in class he would hear that we must carry our Christian witness into all parts of our lives, that Christ must rule during the arithmetic lessons and during our conversation with colleagues and parents as well as with children. He would probably see some sad examples of what happens when leaders are not true to that to which they have dedicated themselves as Christian teachers.

During this year Nabwati would have to come to a personal decision, an agreement between himself and God, as to what kind of a teacher he would be. He must ask himself if he felt strong enough and sure enough of himself to take upon himself the full meaning of being a Christian teacher. His eyes would be opened to the temptations and challenges. Could he do it? He must learn how to plan for these lessons too, more difficult than learning how to teach that five plus two, six plus one and four plus three all equal seven. He must learn to be more familiar with the Source Book containing the methods of the Master Teacher Himself, so that his work would not show signs of poor

preparation. With the Master Teacher making the plans and guiding the decisions, his lifetime of teaching would be happier and more fruitful.

Yes, Nabwati — and Pierre — and Mvuku — and Josephine — and their classmates are at the beginning of their last year of preparation for teaching. It is to be a year of activity, of reflection and of decision. Guided by prayer, they can be directed to lives full of dedicated service for the Master.

The school which Nabwati attends is one of the three teacher-training schools operated by the American Baptists at this level. Students must have finished at least five years of primary school to be admitted to these courses. The course of study lasts for two years and includes intensive work in the principles and methods of teaching in primary schools. The station primary schools serve as practice schools for the students. During the 1958-59 school year 208 boys and 14 girls were attending these Teacher-Training schools.

Upon completion of the course the students receive certificates which entitle them to teach in first and second grades. Many of them however are teaching provisionally in third, fourth and fifth grades. Approximately 300 graduates of these schools are teaching now in the ABFMS primary schools.

The Ecole d'Auxiliaires *at Vanga, a school for training office workers, is on the same scholastic level as these teacher-training schools.* (*See* Business Men for Congo, *Congo News Letter, March 1959*). *Fifty-six students were enrolled in this school during the past year.*

HIGH SCHOOL AWAY FROM HOME

MPUMPU Joseph, a student who has just finished the first half of his secondary training in the Banza Manteke Secondary School, is a young Congolese typical of the more promising of our high school students. With the completion of the first cycle of his secondary training, there still lies before him another lap, a three-year period at the Teacher Training Institute at Kimpese. What has been his past? What are his immediate concerns as he looks forward to another step up the scholastic ladder? What are his hopes and dreams for the future? These are the questions which will concern us as we consider the life of this bright young Congolese.

Mpumpu is eighteen years old, one of five children, born in the Kwilu village of Pukulu, a region served by the Vanga station of the American Baptist Mission. His first years at school, due to a family move to Leopoldville, were spent in the city primary schools. He returned to his native district where he finished the fifth year of primary school. He was then admitted to the Vanga Preparatory School for an additional two years of primary-school training. Upon his graduation, he was among about a dozen boys chosen in a competitive exam to continue schooling at Kimpese or Banza Manteke.

This young lad described his first year at the Banza Manteke school in terms of some of the problems which he faced. He and several others from his area were not immediately accepted by their classmates as they were considered something akin to foreigners. The language was strange for them, and at first it was difficult to "catch a word". Food habits were different, and the manioc flour which he had been accustomed to eating was not part of the standard local diet. Thus it was necessary to change food habits. Students, then as now, were required to do manual work such as cultivating the school gardens. This was considered by many the standard work of women and not of boys in secondary school. Combined with these problems of language, food and work was the basic one of adjusting to new teachers and to a new level of training. As Mpumpu described

it, "I had considerable doubt the first year that I would succed." Not to succeed and to have to return to his Vanga station with the stigma of failure attached to him was a very real fear during the first year.

The first year is now history, however, and with it the second and the third. He did succeed, and before him lies another academic hurdle, the successful completion of the superior cycle of secondary school. He, along with about twenty others of his class, wrote the entrance exam for the second cycle at Kimpese. He was one of four chosen from this group on the basis of this competitive exam in French, Mathematics, History and Religion. As he looks forward to September, it is with a mixture of anticipation and misgivings, for he wonders if some of the same experiences which were his at first at Banza Manteke will be repeated at Kimpese. Again, as he puts it, he must find a place for himself in a new school, adapt himself to new teachers and to a new level of teaching. In the competitive school system in which he finds himself, the fear of not measuring up at least to the minimum standard is an ever-present one. Mpumpu's return to school on September 7 is further complicated by the fact that school costs are constantly rising. Secondary school students must now buy personally their books and school supplies. This government ruling has just about doubled the cost of a year's schooling for a student. This creates an additional burden for him and for his parents, who must stand behind him financially.

What are Mpumpu's hopes and aspirations with regard to the future? His most immediate concern is to finish successfully the final three years of his secondary training. He has every desire to do so and then to give himself to the teaching service. He will graduate in July of 1962 and will then be prepared officially to teach in primary school and provisionally, because of a lack of qualified personnel, in the first cycle of secondary school. He has expressed the willingness to go where the Mission feels that he is needed. Mpumpu has an appreciation of the needs of his own area, but realizes that these are characteristic generally of what he terms "his country"in the present day. He hopes that he can be part of the answer to the present thirst in this

country for more and more schooling.

Two hundred and nine boys and one girl are enrolled in the three high schools sponsored by the American Baptists. They are located at Kimpese, where we cooperate with the British Baptists and the Swedish Evangelical Mission, at Banza Manteke, the school mentioned in this article, and at Vanga, where the first class was enrolled in September 1958.

MBEBE GOES TO KIMPESE

WITHOUT thinking of the meaning of "mbebe" (responsibility), a father and mother gave this name to their little baby boy. It was a very fitting name, for Mbebe grew up with a feeling of responsibility for the Christian education of Congolese boys and girls. Though his parents were not Christian, they permitted his attendance in a mission school near their village. After some years, Mbebe accepted Christ, was baptized and joined the church. He was very happy in his studies, and he looked forward to the day when he would be able to teach others. Graduation day at the mission post was a big day for him, but even more so was the day when he heard that he had passed the entrance examinations of the *Ecole de Moniteurs* (Teacher's High School) at Kimpese. He hurried home to tell his father. By this time his mother had accepted Christ, but his father still would not give up fetish worship. Would he be in favor of further schooling for Christian work?

As is the custom in many parts of the Congo, the father called a meeting of the relatives — those from Mbebe's mother's family, as well as from his father's. Uncles and aunts and even grandparents came. Sunday afternoon they all gathered in a village house under construction, where the men could find plenty of seats on the sticks and timbers lying on the ground. The women sat on mats and on small wooden stools. The village teacher began the meeting with a song and prayer. Then

the father explained the reason for coming together — that Mbebe had been accepted as a student at Kimpese and now wished to go on with his school work to prepare for teaching. Next followed a long discussion for and against the request. Some did not want him to prepare for Christian service. Others preferred work with higher pay, which would bring more money to the family. Finally they voted, those in favor raising their hands. Mbebe was very relieved to see that the majority wanted him to go to Kimpese. However, the practical part of the problem remained : What can we give our boy, Mbebe, to help pay his expenses? One of the uncles offered to give a suitcase, a few suits and other clothing, and some money. His aunts had peanuts which could be sold for money. Others had a supply of dried meat and dried caterpillars, which would help a great deal, if sold nearer Leopoldville where prices are much higher for native food. Still others offered to give dishes and pots and tools for garden work — a hoe and a big knife like a sword, used for cutting down bushes and trees. All these gifts were to be given as soon as possible to Mbebe's father, who would keep a list of everything.

Finally the day arrived when Mbebe could say, "Tomorrow, I leave for school." That night his father presented him with all the gifts. He packed his suitcase full and the rest he tied up in a big cloth. Early the next morning he set off for the automobile road. He had food to eat and to sell. But he must travel two hundred miles by truck to the railroad where he would sell the extra food at high prices. There he would also buy his ticket for the train ride to Kimpese. This would be his first experience riding on a train.

At last, in the early afternoon one day, he was thrilled to see the Bangu, the mountain range which is the natural signpost of Kimpese. As he came out of the train, he found a crowd of students descending from the various coaches. His new classmates ! He followed them and soon saw two missionaries with an automobile and a truck for the baggage. Most of the students had to walk, but the distance was short, so soon all arrived at the villages to which they had been assigned. Mbebe, though a bit confused to see so many people and the strange buildings

along the way, rejoiced because he was now in the place where he could study to become a teacher in the service of the Lord.

"Bless my people at home," he prayed, "and help me to succeed in this new work. I long to return to my village to teach the children and to preach the gospel story. Give me courage and patience, Lord, to prepare for my task."

The Kimpese Evangelical Training Institute (later l'Ecole de Pasteurs et d'Instituteurs) was founded in 1908 in cooperation with the British Baptist Missionary Society. Later the Swedish Evangelical Mission joined with us. From the beginning of the school the American Baptist Mission has depended upon Kimpese for its Christian leaders.

The institution has grown over the years. Today it is a complex of schools, comprising a four-year Theological course for men who have completed at least four years of post-primary training, a six-year normal school course on the secondary level, a teacher-training course of four years, the primary schools necessary for practice teaching, and a two-year manual arts course. In addition the wives of married students attend special classes or are enrolled in one of the schools, depending on their scholastic ability.

At present there are sixty-five men who have graduated from the teacher-training schools and who are working in the American Baptist school system. Only one woman has received a diploma from the teacher-training school. She is Elizabeth Yikulwadio, the wife of one of the students in the Theology School.

Many of the pastors serving in American Baptist churches in Congo are graduates of the schools at Kimpese.

KENE LOOKS AHEAD

AS the chilling winds of cold season rustled past, Kene pulled his tattered old work shirt closer about him. Surely this was the hardest time of all, cold, and not a whole lot to eat. But a man can't just sit in the sun during school vacation when he has next year's school fees to think about, and yes, a pleased smile flickered across his broad features, a new little son or daughter to look after in the near future.

He drove the trowel he was using to lay a brick wall deeper into the soft gray cement mixture. Next year would bring a lot of new experiences. He thought of the last three years he had spent at the Bible Institute at Kikongo. They had been good ones. He hadn't been sick and was making fairly good grades. True, there had been some difficult things to understand but he felt that God had helped him over the rough spots and he felt a deep satisfaction in his heart. A man could not have come in contact with the Word of God like this for three years without learning something.

A twinge of anxiety grasped him. His wife would soon have her baby, their first. He remembered their wedding a year ago. She was beautiful in her long white dress. His elders had chosen wisely. She was a Christian and seemed to want to help him. She could read and write, was a good cook and now, as further proof of her usefulness, was about to bear him a child. Some fellows were not as lucky as he was, he mused to himself.

Very soon school would be starting again. He could picture himself in his khaki uniform, sitting proudly in the fourth-year classroom. At last he was a senior, after three long hard years of study! He felt an almost childish delight at the thought of it.

His wife would be going to school too. He could see her in her bright new school dress hurrying to class each afternoon. She had done the same last year but this year she would have a little bundle to leave in the nursery, he laughed to himself. The missionaries insisted that the wives of the students attend class too. It was good, he thought. It helps her to understand me and my work. A pastor's wife is different. She has to know

enough to be able to help other women. Otherwise, how will the level of our country ever be raised if the women don't know how to have a home with Christ in it ?

Life would not be without its hardships next year. There would be homework, plus manual labor. Gardens would have to be planted and kept up. But it was worth it. He, for one, wouldn't want to be a good-for-nothing.

There were some tough courses ahead, like Pastoral Administration and Church History. However, he had heard from his friends that they were very interesting and practical classes to have.

Perhaps there would be some more reference books on display to buy. Textbooks were furnished by the school but the missionary offered valuable reference books for sale at a special price. Kene was secretly very proud of the few volumes he had been able to collect during the last three years.

As the day wore on and the sun's rays began to give tropical warmth to the earth, Kene was suddenly very happy. One day he would be a pastor, a shepherd of His flock. It was good, yes, very good, he thought, to be a servant of Christ.

BACK TO SCHOOL — AFTER TEN YEARS

TO most students, going back to school means that vacation is over and they start school again, but to a group of ten students in our Theological School, going back to school this year meant that an interval of from two to ten years had elapsed since they had been students. They left their various positions to return to school because they felt that they were called to the ministry. Only one had an interval of just the vacation period between his last year of study and his coming to E.P.I. (*Ecole de Pasteurs et d'Instituteurs*). He graduated from the Bible School at Kikongo and entered here directly. Others had had only two years of teaching since they graduated from the Teachers' Training School at E.P.I., and still others had had as much as ten years of teaching in mission schools and helping with church work, always hoping that the time would come when they could continue their studies and become pastors of mission churches. We recruit candidates for the pastors' course every two years, and then we seldom get more than ten or twelve men who feel called to the ministry.

To pick up and go back to school for most people means to put a few belongings in a trunk and suitcase and go, but to these men it meant getting a family ready to move. They are all married and have children. They had to leave an established household, for during several years of teaching they had accumulated furniture and other goods. It was necessary to dispose of their belongings by leaving them with relatives and friends and to take only the necessary clothes and small, easily movable household equipment to E.P.I. So instead of the single, carefree student, there was a whole family to transplant in order that a man could continue his studies and answer God's call.

In some families there are children who are in grade school and so entered our elementary school here. Others are pre-school age or babes in arms. When a married man enters school here, his wife also goes to school, so the wives of these theological students also came back to school. Some of them had had only one or two years of school previously, but others had had many more. Our women's school is organized to teach all women

whether they have had one year or eight years of school. There are only four classes and forty women at the present time, but there are actually more than four groups. Some classes must be subdivided into other groups suitable to the level of the capabilities of the women.

But how can a woman with small children go to school? We have a nursery where the babies and pre-school children are cared for during the hours the mother is in school. There are two women who care for them, and their hands are full for three hours every day. That seems to be the most that these women can spare for school and still keep up with their other duties of cooking for the family, gardening, housecleaning, washing, and caring for the children.

So these students have been transplanted from a fairly settled existence with a salary sufficient to supply their needs, to a temporary existence of four years in a community quite different from what they have been used to. An adjustment is required to come *back to school* under these circumstances.

We are thankful for these men. They are the hope for the future of the Church of Christ in Congo, and there are all too few of them. We hope and pray that more will be called, or rather will hear the call of God, to serve their people.

MY ENTRANCE INTO THE UNIVERSITY

IT was early on the morning of September 22, 1958 that I left my native village, my relatives and my own family to enter the "Official University of Belgian Congo and Ruanda Urundi" at Elisabethville, a city in the eastern part of Congo.

After I left Leopoldville I had two different types of thoughts — happy ones and sad ones. I was sad to leave my loved ones. But I was happy too, for that day a dream which I had dreamed from childhood was beginning to come true — that is, to be a worthy tool of the Lord among the youth of my country. After a full day's journey I arrived at the school, and that day I began my life as a student again.

During these days the old picture of Congo is changing. Many of the young people are awaking and thinking about learning with new enthusiasm and ambition. Each person has his own aim. I understood that the first day when my fellow-students and I went to the school. First of all the professor asked us which science we wished to follow. I heard many sorts of answers: "I want to study administrative and social sciences." "I want to take up consular service." "I want to follow the commercial course." I heard many different answers, but my own thoughts were made up, and when it was my turn I answered, "I want to follow the science of teaching." The professor said, "You have chosen well."

Sometimes I am not sure that I chose well. But I know that this choice to serve the young people is not a new one for me. In 1944 I entered the central school at Banza Manteke. During the long vacation I was asked to teach in a village which did not have a teacher. I did so. The following year they asked me to do so again. I tried, even though I wasn't very old. In May 1946 I finished the primary school. Then I was sent to be a teacher again, and I taught for a whole year. I began to enjoy the work, but I left it to enter secondary school. After three years I received my certificate, and then I began teaching in the Banza Manteke Central School. In 1953 I left my work again so that I could complete the second cycle of secondary school

at Kimpese. When I graduated in 1956 I was asked to join the teaching staff at Kimpese. After two more years of teaching I was given permission to enter the University. Now my only thoughts are to fight the type of fight which will lead me to success so that my aims and dreams can be realized.

There is a great deal of work and a need for workmen. And there is only one way for the work to be accomplished — each person must accept his responsibility. Just as someone else cannot satisfy my hunger by eating food himself, so I cannot expect someone else to fulfill my responsibility. My responsibility is mine. Another's responsibility is his. And the way to become a workman worthy of carrying responsibility is to be brought up in the fear and respect of God, and to have a good education. My education is built on those ideas.

I cannot forget the words of one of my best teachers, Tata Remy Malutama, because they gave me a new love and gratification in my heart. He said, "Think about your neighbor who is in darkness."

When we walk with God things become easier. I am asking His strength and His blessing so that one day I will be able to say joyfully, "Here I am, send me."

Noe Diawaku is the first of our American Baptist young men to enter the University at Elisabethville. He is the second to have any education on a university level. The first was the teacher whom he mentioned, Remy Malutama. Mr. Malutama completed his education in Belgium and returned to Congo to become director of the secondary school at Banza Manteke. After only a few months of service he died. His death was a blow to missionaries and Africans alike. (See Congo News Letter, June 1956.) But his influence lives on in his students — Noe Diawaku, Thomas Nlandu, Jean Masamba. These latter two will enter the year of study preparatory to the University Course in September.

MY NAME IS NGIZULU ANDRE

I HAVE never had a job like the one I have now. And I have had several kinds of jobs. When I first graduated from school I taught in my village school. After that I went to Matadi and worked in several offices. Then I heard they were looking for a teacher in the Leopoldville schools, and I asked my friend, Miss Ford, if there would be a place for me. She knew they were looking for a teacher in the Christian Center. That is how I am where I am today.

I am a teacher, it would seem, of all the church people in Kintambo. I have the queerest hours of work. While others work, I rest. When they get out from work, then is the time I go to it. And I have everybody from children and young people to their mothers and fathers in my classes. You might say that the whole church family is my responsibility.

Every week from Monday through Friday I have the women's school. About one hundred women are enrolled in these classes, which run the gamut from those who can't read at all to those who are doing fourth-grade work. There are six classes in all. The women of the church help me, but I teach the learners, using the Laubach method. Girls who are too old for school come and learn to read, and go into third grade in school without any trouble at all. I also teach the top class of women who are reading the Bible and doing fourth-grade arithmetic. After each class I put the next day's work on the blackboards for all classes — writing exercises and arithmetic problems. The women bring their children, of course, and I have to keep an eye on them too.

The women teachers and some of the women in the most advanced class stay two mornings a week for classes in French. Then we have a little time to plan our weekly lessons and work on Bible lessons.

At three in the afternoon I open up the game room and library and bookstore. Checkers, pingpong and football are our greatest loves. The checker boards are literally scraped to pieces. One day a week we have junior choir practice. Another

day, Thursday is the special day for the young people's societies. They play basketball and volleyball and then have their meetings.

Tuesday afternoons we have baby clinic. The dispensary nurses have charge of this, but I have to get the mothers in line and distribute their cards. And when the women go out to the various villages every Friday afternoon for clinics, it is my job to see that all cards are in order and put into the car, along with the sewing materials.

Two afternoons a week the women come to sew. They take charge of this work themselves, but again I have to see that the records and materials are in order. These afternoons I feel as if I were running a three-ring circus. Every afternoon there are young people working for their Bibles and hymnbooks. I have to see that they keep busy. We have planted five nkamba trees this year, and about fifteen other kinds. I suppose upwards of fifty young people have earned a Bible this way, and they are still coming.

Two evenings a week I teach French in the evening school. This is my biggest chance to come to know the fathers of the church, although I work with them some in the library, in the Sunday School, and in the church itself.

This work is fast convincing me that I am called to be a pastor. Now I am trying to convince my family that I want to go to pastor's school. It may be that they will not accept it, nor relieve me of many family responsibilities. If they don't and won't, here I will stay, a teacher of the whole church family. I have never had a job like this one I have now. It brings me very close to God.

ON FILLING A VACUUM

NATURE abhors a vacuum, said the early physicists. It is the same in the spiritual realm. But only Christians can perceive the burning desire of the Spirit of God that "all the world should be filled with the knowledge of the Lord", "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." "Him to know aright is life eternal", but great areas in Africa remain without any Christian to tell about Him, or to warn of eternal death. Such an area exists like a vacuum midway between the four stations in the Kwango region of our Congo mission. We need no Macedonian in a vision to urge us in that direction. It is sufficient that the spiritual vacuum is there. But the time and method of approach demand divine guidance if it is to be truly "the Lord's work".

From our station at Boko the southern entrance to this area is Kobo, on the Bakali river. Two indications were that the Lord was leading us in that direction. First, in February we had been able to place a full-time evangelist at Kenge, the government district headquarters. Second, in April the old post at Kobo had been reoccupied and a teacher provided. Recently we made a cautious trip of investigation northward to Kolokoso. We would witness of our Lord where the people were willing to receive us. The high points of this trip came just after midday as we neared a series of three or four villages along the road.

After rolling northward over a vast grassy plain we descended to a small river, the Lukiri. It was an inviting place for lunch, so we stopped near the water. Was it only circumstance that brought seven individuals to the same spot only minutes after our arrival? We wondered more and more as we recalled the apostle Paul and how he found the first Asian convert by the riverside.

To five men and women returning that way from the forest we passed greetings. Immediately good-natured conversation followed as they discovered that these strangers knew their language. Both of my companions, evangelist Mbanzi of Kenge and senior evangelist Kisaka, were from the Vanga area. They

explained later that these people were called Basamba, and that their language was a mixture of Kihungana and Kimbala, both of which they knew well. Immediately after these folks left two men arrived at the water and were soon engrossed in conversation with my friends, I looking on, but praying inwardly. Suddenly, as if this news were too good not to share, they stood and insisted that we go to their village where they could call their friends to hear. Amazed and grateful, we drove the short distance to the village.

We entered the village expectantly, but were immediately accosted by a burly individual with neatly filed teeth who said loudly that they did not want any new religion here. Sizing him up as a man who had done military service, Kisaka asked him in Lingala, the language of the military, how many faiths were permitted in the army. Catholic and Protestant, he replied. Well, said Kisaka, if it was right to permit two in the army, why not in the community ? Defeated by this logic, the man allowed that if any should want to hear us he guessed it would be permitted, since we had not come to argue religion. Again I thanked God for the language ability of Kisaka and Mbanzi.

We did not need to call a congregation. The whole village was already present in force. When they had sat and become quiet we sang a hymn. Mbanzi followed with a message describing the eternal consequences of sin or of faith, as Jesus pointed out in the allegory of Lazarus and the rich man. Deep impression was evident in the faces of the village people. As we closed the worship, the loudspoken military man voiced thanks for the whole village. In fact, he said, he himself would like to be baptized by us, as the priest maintained that he could not have two wives. To his surprise we assured him kindly that we held the same standard. Well, he replied, in that case he would certainly go to the State and have the second marriage annulled. We left the village rejoicing.

We drove slowly by the next village. A band of youngsters was returning from the spring and crossed the road as we arrived. Though often rural people run or hide at the sight of a strange vehicle, the surprise at hearing their own language calling them held them long enough for us to gain their confidence.

Finally, when they knew who we were, we asked whether any in the village was a Christian. No, the older boys assured us, nobody would pray in their village. Ah, yes, one little girl argued as we prepared to go on. There was one woman who prayed. Then we would visit her, we offered happilky, and we entered the village.

Sure enough, one woman had been converted while visiting in another village where Christians were active, but now she was feeling quite alone in her faith and tempted to quit. We had come just in time. Again we found the whole village gathering, and so we invited all who wished to listen to be seated under a tree. All went well until we began to pray. We bowed our heads and closed our eyes. But the prayer was interrupted by murmurs and excited chattering as over half the group jumped to their feet in fright and dashed to safety behind their houses. Someone had whispered that God would fall down out of the tree into their midst and leave them all enchanted. Calm was regained with difficulty, and most preferred to remain outside the area of the tree. But the message of God's love was heard gladly. As we stood to leave we promised to pray for this solitary Christian in a pagan village. She, too, promised to be true to Christ and to let her light shine.

Time was passing and we had far to go. We came to several other villages where isolated Christians, hungry for fellowship, begged us for regular visits. This we could not promise as yet. We were certain only that God's will includes this neglected area. Our prayers and our plans will continually look toward the time when there will be no more spiritual vacuum here.

THE PROPHET

JEERS, abusive remarks and derisive laughter seemed to surround the sick-looking, emaciated woman, heavy with child, who stood apart — alone — yet surrounded by scores of hooting, mocking Africans. One felt that with a little provocation they would have followed the jeers with kicks and blows and maybe worse. "Look, look, we have a witch. She's even admitted it !" It was better than a circus attraction for the pushing, shoving mob of eager spectators.

Yes, the scene was Africa, but not deep in the primitive jungle. It took place by the very civilized-appearing and charming little railroad station of Lufu. The people doing the shouting were no naked savages, but inhabitants of an area which has been exposed to Christian missions for over eighty years. Probably a majority of them had had some schooling in mission schools, either Protestant or Catholic.

They had come from the capital city of Leopoldville, or the port city of Matadi, or from as far away as Boma on a pilgrimage to "the prophet" of Kemba. Some came just to see, but many of them came for the healing of real or half-imagined diseases and infirmities. Some of them had escorted the dead body of a relative in hopes that the prophet could raise him from the dead as he had done, they had heard, for others. All had crowded into dusty, rattling, bumpy commercial trucks for the whole trip or at least for the sixty-kilometer journey from the Lufu station to the little village of Kemba to which "the prophet" had recently returned after forty years of exile in the interior where he had been sent for belonging to a forbidden political-religious movement.

"Brighten the Corner where you are", or "Come Holy Spirit", they sang with gusto as they jounced over the rugged dirt road which took them through — and beyond — the Banza Manteke mission station.

At Kemba some did seem to receive renewed health. One man, exultingly praising the prophet, explained that he was so good that he had healed his eyes when he hadn't even realized

they'd been "sick". The prophet "raised" those from the dead who happened to be in a coma, a hysterical state, or just simply so weak that the people called them already "dead". But if the case did not fit into one of these categories, the prophet berated the people for bringing him an "empty shell".

"Why do you bring him to me when you've already eaten his spirit?" he asks them. If the sick ones are not healed, he tells them to go back and first "agree" with their family and clan. And they interpret his words to mean, "Go and look for the one who has bewitched you." Sometimes the *ndoki*, the witch, is found right there among those who have come along. Sometimes an *ndoki* is found in the village or city and brought to the prophet.

And so an old man, feeble and crippled up himself, probably sincere, heals in "the name of Jesus", gets the people to give up their fetishes and is causing a resurgence of witchcraft and witch-hunting such as has been unknown in the area for decades. Because he holds worship services, because he calls himself a protestant Christian, because he takes away the fetishes, because he "heals" in Christ's name, many, many church members believe he *is* a prophet sent from God. And unfortunately many of them deep down in their hearts still believe a person may be bewitched by another. Like the prophet, they believe witchcraft is bad and should not be practiced, but they do believe it exists.

It is hard to explain the appeal of this man which draws sometimes a dozen big trucks — hundreds of people — a day to the little village of Kemba. Partly it is just the hope of any sick person that he may be cured; partly it is the desire of the Congolese to be "saved" by a prophet of his own race. And then perhaps the fierce desire for self-government has unconsciously driven the people to seek the old ways — even the ways of witchcraft—which are truly their own and not those brought in by white people.

But why, after eighty years of contact with Christianity, can these superstitious beliefs still have such a firm grip on the average person? It is a question which the church must ask itself, seeking to find an answer and a remedy. Perhaps the church has become too much a fellowship which one enters by

adhering to a code of rather rigid rules, rather than by a real personal experience which radically changes one's life. Perhaps we have taught the Bible in our schools and churches in such a manner that it has come to mean only a series of miraculous events which one attempts to duplicate in this day and age, when we should have been emphasizing the deeper truth which is the guide for our lives. Perhaps in our emphasis on training boys and men, to the partial neglect of girls and women, we are now reaping what we have sown — or failed to sow. For it is the woman who brings up the child. And no matter how well-educated his father, if a child is taught by his mother that certain fetishes protect him from sickness and harm, that *ndokis* can bewitch him, that — well, any one of a hundred superstitious beliefs — if a child has heard these things from the time he was a baby, he may reject them intellectually after he is educated, but emotionally it will be pretty hard to rid himself of them completely. Fortunately, more and more girls are now finishing primary schools and even going on for higher training. Banza Manteke has had a post-primary home-making school for ten years, and several of the other stations are planning to change their courses to the post-primary level. This should help to produce better-trained mothers of the future.

But final solutions to the problem can come only as a result of genuine heart searching by the Congo Church, and much prayer to God for guidance in leading these people into a genuine experience of new life in Christ Jesus.

NEWS ITEMS

— FROM THE STATIONS —

A THREE-DAY institute was held at SONA BATA for women from the village churches. Fifty-two delegates attended. The women were instructed in how to conduct the worship services at their own monthly women's meetings. They were also given ideas as to sewing, crocheting and knitting projects which their groups may undertake. One woman was chosen as leader of all the women. She will keep in touch with the local groups throughout the year. We had the good fortune of having Mrs. Ruth Engwall with us to give several hours of instruction in Christian Family Living. The women responded enthusiastically, and we trust their enthusiasm and what they learned during during these days will be carried by them to their local churches.

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The Women's Society at LEOPOLDVILLE invited women from fourteen churches in the city and suburbs to an all-day basket meeting. Over four hundred women attended the sessions which included lectures on hygiene and child care, two sessions on the Christian Family, devotional messages, and a business session, at which the women were encouraged to organize societies if they have not as yet done so. The courtyard at noon reminded more than one person of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. The women spread their cloths on the grass, opened their picnic baskets, shared their lunches, and gathered up over 100 rolls which could not be eaten at the end ! The members of the Women's Society of the Kintambo Church were the object of envy as they came all dressed in the same style and color garment — the new uniform.

— *FROM THE MISSIONARY FAMILY* —

We have been happy to welcome a number of babies into our missionary family this year. They are:

Kristen Rose Uhlinger, February 24, to Philip and Rose Uhlinger
Glen Raymond Stuart, March 4, to Charles and Jeannette Stuart
James Brainerd Fraser, March 7, to Brainerd and Esther Fraser
Adele Marie Rumohr, May 14, to John and Trissie Rumohr
Marcus Joseph Forcinelli, June 8, to Joseph and Ethel Forcinelli.

The Congo News Letter extends its congratulations to the parents and its prayers for health and happiness to these "future missionaries".

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A number of missionaries left the Congo for furlough during the past few months. Rev. and Mrs. Forcinelli left on May 2. Rev. and Mrs. Barnett and Debbie left Leopoldville on June 20. Others whose furloughs came due during the summer months are Rev. and Mrs. Uhlinger with Nancy, Douglas, and Kristen, Rev. and Mrs. James Clark and Betty, Jean, and Sylvia, Miss Marion Simmons, Miss Jean Luckey, and Miss Eva Shepard. We wish to all of them a happy and profitable furlough and a speedy return to Congo.

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Douglas Brown, son of Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Brown, and Robert Hall, son of Rev. and Mrs. Elmer Hall, have graduated from the high school for missionary children at Lubondai. They left Congo for the United States to continue their studies there. Douglas will enter Linfield College, McMinnville, Oregon, and Robert will enroll at the University of Redlands, Redlands, California. We wish for both of them a happy and successful. time in college.

COMING ATTRACTION

BEGINNING in the March 1960 issue, a series of excerpts from letters written by Rev. Charles H. Harvey will be one of the features of the Congo News Letter. Mr. Harvey arrived in Congo for the first time in 1880. He served at Palabala, Matadi and Banza Manteke stations until 1918, when he retired and returned to his home in England. A year later he died there. His letters will provide an interesting contrast to other articles in the Congo News Letter which are concerned with the Congo of today. We are sure that those who enjoy mission history will find the series stimulating and interesting.

DIRECTORY SUPPLEMENT

IN BELGIUM — completing required courses:

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Polley

In U.S. — completing preparations for service in Congo:

Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Fountain
Rev. John Marshall

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* *Precede name of each station with A.B.F.M.S., except Kimpese*
† *All air-mail addressed via Léopoldville instead of Matadi*
‡ *For air-mail add — and Léopoldville.*